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OUR FIRST WORLD WAR SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

by T. Swann Harding
1943

Many of us somewhat vaguely remember the farm slogan of the World War of 1917-18: Food Will Win the War. But how many of us remember David F. Houston, the Secretary of Agriculture at that time, the kind of man he was, and the character of the reports he submitted annually to President Woodrow Wilson?

The Department of Agriculture had undergone a relatively long static period during the incumbency of Secretary James Wilson which extended from March 7, 1897, until March 6, 1913. During this 16 years, of course much progress was made by the Department, particularly in the matter of organizing and expanding research. Many of its detached agencies were placed together in formal bureaus whereas they had formerly been semi-autonomous. The scientific personnel of the Department had expanded rapidly and the research it carried on had notably aided agricultural production.

Farmers were relatively prosperous during this period but towards the end of it they began to face urgent problems. Thus our all-time agricultural export high occurred as early as 1898. As science came to their aid it also became increasingly easy for farmers to "overproduce" in the sense of exceeding "effective" demand. Hence social science began to seep into the Department. It came to be realized that the farmer needed more assistance in marketing, better credit facilities, and the standardization of agricultural commodities.

Some studies in these fields were rather inconspicuously undertaken during Secretary Wilson's administration though full realization of their

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There is no doubt that the library is one of the most important institutions in the city. It is a place where the people can find the books they need for their studies and for their recreation. The library is a place where the people can find the books they need for their studies and for their recreation. The library is a place where the people can find the books they need for their studies and for their recreation.

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importance was lacking. New means also began to be devised of demonstrating approved farm practices to practical agriculturalists and of giving them the essentials of adult education in farm science right while they cultivated the land. But the fact that many new departmental activities must soon assume precedence did not really dawn in Washington until Secretary Houston's appointment.

David F. Houston took his masters degree in government at Harvard. Later he taught in the University of Texas until he became president of the Texas land-grant college. He left this school to become Chancellor of Washington University at St. Louis from whence he went to the Cabinet. He served from March 6, 1913, until February 1, 1920, when he became Secretary of the Treasury to be temporarily succeeded in Agriculture by E. T. Meredith who served till March 4, 1921.

Secretary Houston ushered in a new dynamic phase of the Department's history. He was perhaps the most distinguished man intellectually ever to head the Department until the time of Henry A. Wallace. He was an economist, a philosopher, and a financier. He had remarkable prescience and sensed the fact that the time had come when the agricultural industry must be planned in a national way. But he was also a practical man who made almost immediate changes to bring the Department into step with the times. His first annual report to the President, dated December 1, 1913, goes far to indicate the kind of man that he was. Much of it is not yet out of date.

In opening his report Secretary Houston told about certain obviously needed changes he had effected in the business operations of the Department, and stressed the fact that it was difficult to procure personnel with

improvement was lacking. The money also began to be drained of money.
 situation appeared from time to time in various circumstances and in
 giving him the possibility of being admitted in some degree right
 after they celebrated the year. But the fact that they were disappointed
 situation was very serious and seemed to be very much in Washington
 until January 1900's movement.

David E. Houston took his position as a member of the Government at Harvard.
 later he took in the University of Texas until he became President of
 the Texas Land-Grant College. He left this school in 1900 to become
 of Washington University at St. Louis. This school he went to the United
 in 1900. He was then elected to the University of Texas in 1900, when he became
 University of the President. He was temporarily succeeded in 1900 by
 E. T. Merrill who served until 1901.

University of Texas moved in a new building in 1901. The Department's
 history. He was among the most distinguished men in the University even to
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 cept, a philosopher, and a historian. He had remarkable presence and
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 almost immediate success in with the Department into work with the State.
 His first annual report to the President, when Houston, 1901, was the
 to indicate the time at which he was. Much of it is not yet out of date.
 In reading his report I believe I believe this report contains what was
 is needed change he had effected in the various operations of the State.
 next, and showed the fact that it was difficult to picture persons with

the requisite training and experience in the various fields of agriculture at the low rates of salary then paid. He cited the fact that \$4,000 was an inadequate maximum salary for his personnel and that many leaders in Department work could easily command salaries twice as high as they received if they would undertake work outside.

Meanwhile much of the Department's work had already been reorganized. The name of the Bureau of Statistics had been changed to the Bureau of Agricultural Forecasts and arrangements were being made to give farmers the benefit of promptly published agricultural crop forecasts. The economic and health importance of the Food and Drug Act was stressed and suggestions were made for its strengthening by amendment. But as the Secretary said: "Still further changes in organization seem requisite." The Department, like other large institutions, had tended to develop into highly specialized groups with somewhat arbitrary boundary lines. These were defined more by the methods employed than by the objects sought. "Such arbitrary divisional lines, separating branches of work aiming at a common result, produce a certain amount of jealousy and assumed conflict of interest and lost motion, leading eventually to stagnation."

A new and basic plan of cooperation, coordination, and a broader grouping of departmental services were required. The Department must manage to reach with the information it developed in research the people who must change the knowledge into productive action. Possibly six broad groupings might be set up to accomplish this, something like a Research Service, a Rural Organization Service, a States Relations Service, a Weather Service, a Forest Service, and a Regulatory Service. Houston therefore sought Congressional warrant fundamentally to reorganize the Department.

As he said, the Department had hitherto concerned itself in the main, and naturally, with production problems. But other problems were urgent, some of them being increased tenancy, absentee ownership, depleted and exploited soils, inadequate farm business methods, and a failure on the part of "the great majority of farmers to apply existing agricultural knowledge." According to the best "guesses" the Secretary could secure, less than 40 percent of the farm land was reasonably well cultivated and less than 12 percent was yielding fairly full or above-average returns. Then Secretary Houston wrote:

X
We have unmistakably reached the period where we must think and plan. We are suffering the penalty of too great ease of living and of making a living. It is not singular that we should find ourselves in our present plight. Recklessness and waste have been incident to our breathless conquest of a nation, and we have had our minds too exclusively directed to the establishment of industrial supremacy in the keen race for competition with foreign nations. We have been so bent on building up great industrial centers by every natural and artificial device that we have had little thought for the very foundations of our industrial existence.

So far, the Department had been content to direct its attention to the problems of individual farmers "and the broader economic problems of rural life have received relatively little attention." Now such problems were urgent and must be attended. For "in many directions further production waits on better distribution and...the field of distribution presents problems which raise in very grave ways the simple issue of justice." The farmer does not get what he should for his product, the consumer pays too much for it, and the existing systems of distribution add unnecessary burdens.

As he said, the Department has already commenced work in the
field, and naturally, with numerous problems, the other problems have
arisen, some of them being technical, others financial, and a further to the
and somewhat wider, Department has business relations, and a further to the
part of the great majority of business to supply existing technical problems
before, according to the past experience, the Department would require, 1944
than in previous to the time that was necessary, with minimum and less
than in previous was thinking fairly well of above-average business. Then

Department's position:

It has been established, however, the period when we must think
and plan, so as to anticipate the growth of the great mass of
living and of making a living. It is not enough that we should
find ourselves in our present position. Development and more
have been required to our knowledge, progress of a number, and we
have not only the knowledge, progress of a number, and we
of technical progress in the past, but we have been required to
foreign business. It has been so that we have been required to
technical progress in the past, but we have been required to
have had little chance for the very foundation of our industrial
development.

In fact, the Department has been required to direct its attention to
the problems of technical progress and the industrial progress of the
life have remained relatively little attention. But such progress was in-
ward and must be outward. For the very direction further attention will
on better distribution and... the kind of distribution towards progress
which takes in your country with the single issue of justice. The latter does
not yet seem to be clear for his justice, the progress has been made for it,
and the existing system of distribution and management progress.

We need no expository comment to see that a competent mind was functioning here. Secretary Houston continued:

Just what part of the burden is due to lack of systematic planning, or inefficiency and economic waste, or to unfair manipulation, one cannot say. As difficult as are the problems of production, they are relatively simple as compared with those of distribution, and there is danger not so much that nothing will be done, but that pressure will be brought to bear on the Department to take action everywhere before it is prepared to act intelligently anywhere. The Department has given assistance here and there in the past; it is prepared to give further assistance and information now, and it has shaped its projects and instituted more systematic investigations, which should have results of great practical value to individuals and to communities.

The notion that the idea of agricultural planning is new in the United States seems unfounded. An act of March 4, 1913, had been passed "To enable the Secretary of Agriculture to acquire and diffuse among the people of the United States useful information on subjects connected with the marketing and distribution of farm products." Wider planning for the agricultural industry loomed not far ahead.

This act would enable marketing surveys to be made; it would underwrite studies in transportation and storage problems, investigations of city marketing and distribution, the promulgation of market standards and grades for agricultural commodities, and would promote research on cooperative production and marketing. The Secretary went into detail about the meaning of uniform commodity standards, the elimination of waste, the necessity for serving consumer interest better, and the need for improved rural credit.

He considered rural life, the need for better schools, more comfortable rural living, improved health standards, better sanitation and hygiene in the farm home. He cited good roads as a prerequisite for better marketing and emphasized the necessity for improved enforcement of the Food and Drug Act to protect both rural and urban people.

He turned next to the status of the farm woman because her domestic work had a direct bearing on the efficiency of field workers, and her handling of the home could alone make farm life satisfactory and pleasurable. He said that "the facts that the woman's work and time have a real monetary value and that her strength is not unlimited have not been given the consideration they deserve. As a result, on many farms where there is always money enough to buy the latest agricultural appliance there is seldom a surplus to provide the woman in her productive work with power machinery that will lighten her physical labor," and so on.

The Department now began to feel that intelligent help to women in home-management problems would contribute greatly to successful farming. To ascertain what sort of help women wanted a letter of inquiry was addressed to the housewives of 55,000 progressive farmers all over the United States. Many sought means of increasing their own personal income from poultry, butter making, or gardening; many wanted suggestions regarding new handicrafts of gainful home occupations. Others wanted to know better means of marketing the cakes, preserves, and fancy work they now produced.

An Office of Information was established in the Department and a new plan of publication work was adopted. Better coordination was sought with the State agricultural colleges and experiment stations. The Lever bill was proposed which later set up the Extension Service. A new era dawned for the Department of Agriculture with this first report of Secretary Houston. Subsequent reports recorded the unfolding of his plans in practice.

For Houston was not a man to set forth a theoretical program and thereafter ignore it. In his second report dated November 14, 1914, he

It is not possible to give a full account of the work done in the past few years, but it is possible to give a general impression of the results. The work has been done in the following fields:

The Department was happy to find that additional help was given in home-management programs would contribute greatly to successful families. The committee was sure of help would mean a lot of help to many of the children of 25,000 children in the United States. They would mean of increasing their own personal income from twenty. Better habits, or generally, many better habits and habits of children from the community. Upward means to know better ways of thinking. The entire situation, in fact, was not only good, but was good.

As Office of Information was interested in the Department and a
any plan of investigation work was completed. Further investigation was made
with the State Department, National Archives and Government agencies. The latter
will be prepared after the first of the Department. A new one is being
for the Department of Agriculture with this first report at present location.
Subsequent reports received the following of the same in practice.
For instance was not a new or old report - historical program and
Departmental interest in. In the second report dated December 14, 1941, he

remarked that, "It has been assumed that we have a natural monopoly in agriculture -- that it could take care of itself, and for the most part we have cheerfully left it to do so." But that day was over now. The Department was now not only studying the problem of production; it had an active interest in agricultural economics and sociology.

Houston remarked on the unstable character of Southern agriculture in this report. Livestock were neglected. The average farm family in Georgia produced only two eggs a week, two-thirds of an ounce of butter and two-thirds of a pint of milk a day, and one-third of a hog, one-twelfth of a beef, and one one-hundredth of a sheep per year per family member. "The exclusive devotion to a single crop anywhere is unwise for normal times and spells disaster in times of disturbance," we read, and crop diversification was urgently commended to the South.

The Office of Farm Management was now hard at work on studies of farm operations and Secretary Houston said the economist had his place in all agricultural undertakings. He announced that a constructive agricultural program must necessarily contemplate distribution as well as production. The producer must receive a fair reward and agriculture still knew almost nothing of distribution economics. Cooperative marketing, rural credit, the better organization of rural communities and laws dealing with cotton and grain standards, warehousing, and land-mortgage banks were all important departmental interests now.

The Cotton Futures Act to reform methods and practices of the exchanges had been passed. Forestry and water conservation occupied considerable space in the report, it being said that "Water is a National Forest resource of even greater importance than timber or range, for the forests feed every important western stream."

remained that, "It has been assumed that we have a national emergency in agriculture -- that it would take care of itself, and for the most part we have obviously left it to do so." But that has not been true. The Government was not only neglecting the problem of agriculture, it had no active interest in agricultural economics and sociology.

However, turning to the industrial situation of America without more in this report, historians were neglected. The system that led to the 1920's produced only two eggs a week, two-thirds of an ounce of oil, and two-thirds of a pint of milk a day, and one-third of a bushel, one-third of a bushel, and one-third of a bushel of wheat per acre per year. The exclusive devotion to a single crop system is a major factor in the decline of agriculture in this country, and this is a factor in the decline of the nation. It is not only a factor in the decline of the nation, it is a factor in the decline of the nation.

The Office of Rural Development has been at work on studies of farm production and forestry. However, the studies of the farm in all agricultural development. It understood that a comprehensive national farm program must necessarily encompass all aspects of the farm, not only the production of crops, but also the production of livestock, and the production of forest products. The program must include a full survey and examination of the farm, almost nothing in the history of the farm. Cooperative marketing, rural credit, the better organization of rural communities and the better use of the farm and forest resources, and the better use of the farm and forest resources. The better use of the farm and forest resources. The better use of the farm and forest resources. The better use of the farm and forest resources.

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Departmental reorganization had gone further, in part to divide activities into orderly groups as regulatory, research, and extension. The farm management and farm demonstration work were to be removed from the Bureau of Plant Industry, Houston having recognized that they dealt essentially with business and economic problems, and with rural adult education in approved agricultural practices in every field, not plants alone. The Secretary also wrote:

"While we labor to increase the supply of material things we cannot neglect the higher things -- the intellectual and social sides of rural life." But already war waged in Europe and the Secretary's plans for American agriculture would be in part deflected by the impact of world catastrophe. Secretary Houston's third report, dated November 13, 1915, opened thus: "In spite of the greatly disturbed condition of the world during the last 15 months, agriculture in the United States, as a whole, had prospered."

A little later we read: "The abundant supplies of foodstuffs made it possible for the country to meet the greatly increased foreign demand and still to retain enough at home to satisfy the normal domestic needs." Emphasis was placed upon means of getting new and useful information from scientist to farmer expeditiously, to further farm production. The Secretary also observed that a farm unit might be efficient for production and yet unprofitable because the marketing problem went unconsidered.

A Market News Service had been established to secure and rapidly disseminate information on current wholesale and jobbing prices. The Office of Markets and Rural Organization was also devoting much energy to

Department of Agriculture has four bureaus, in part to divide activities into subject groups as regulatory, research, and extension. The four bureaus and their jurisdiction with view to the Federal Government of Food Industry, Extension having jurisdiction that they could essentially with subject and research problem, and with rural affairs extension in approved agricultural operations in every field, not climate alone. The Government also

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A Bureau New Orleans has been established to receive and supply information on current conditions and shipping routes.

The Office of Defense and Civil Organization was also having much work to do in connection with the various agencies of the Government and the

the intensive study of marketing problems. Cotton standards had been established under the Cotton Futures Act enacted August 18, 1914, and the act as a whole so far worked well. The Cooperative Extension Act of May 8, 1914 made provision for a Nation-wide system of instruction for the farm population in agriculture and home economics, establishing close partnership between Federal and State agencies.

The fourth report, dated November 15, 1916, truthfully opened thus: "The half of agriculture embracing the marketing of farm products, rural finance, and rural organization has strikingly occupied attention during the last three and one-half years." Specifically there had been much helpful activity in the fields of cotton futures exchanges, rural credits, marketing, warehousing for agricultural products, highway construction, rural adult education, and forest and water conservation.

The United States Grain Standards Act, the United States Warehouse Act, the Federal Farm Loan Act, and the Federal Aid Road Act had all been enacted now. The Office of Markets and Rural Organization was to become the Bureau of Markets. The stabilization of agricultural production was mentioned as important. But: "It is highly desirable, therefore, further to broaden the areas for the staples as far as experience and sound economics may warrant." Little or nothing was said of increased European demand for farm products.

But Secretary Houston's fifth report, dated November 16, 1917, opens ominously: "When, on April 6, 1917, the existence of a state of war with Germany was declared by Congress, this country was facing an unsatisfactory situation in respect to its supply of foods and feedstuffs." The production of leading cereal crops in 1916 had been relatively small. Adverse weather conditions it was felt would decrease the 1917 wheat crop. The 1916 potato

yield was also low, yet potatoes and wheat were of primary importance in time of war.

The Department immediately took steps to allay apprehension, promote economy and thrift, secure fuller conservation of farm products and foods, and insure increased production of all essential agricultural commodities. In January 1917 the South was entreated to produce a surplus of foodstuffs. A conference of State and Federal agricultural officials was held in St. Louis April 9 and 10, 1917, and editors of farm journals were called in April 11. Here the agricultural situation was thoroughly surveyed and discussed.

Houston wrote: "The Nation was fortunate in having had in existence for many years, for the purpose of promoting scientific and practical agriculture, its Federal Department of Agriculture, and a department of agriculture and a land-grant college in each State, as well as great farmers' organizations."

On April 5, 1917, Mr. Herbert Hoover was invited by the Council of National Defense to return to this country and advise regarding the handling of domestic food supplies and of those to be sent to Europe. The Food Production and Food Control Acts were passed May 20 and Hoover became head of the Food Administration.

In 1917 a sharp distinction was drawn between the Department and the Administration. All activities for war purposes that amounted to an extension of the Department's normal activities would be handled by the Department; the Administration would attend distribution and consumption problems, exports, imports, prices, purchase, requisition, and storage of farm commodities, and the like. On April 18, 1917, Houston transmitted to the Senate his proposals for increasing the production, improving the distribution, and promoting the

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ence, industry and trade, and other matters under the same

control, and to secure immediate production of all essential agricultural

commodities. In January 1917 the South was organized to produce a surplus

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was held in St. Louis April 2 and 10, 1917, and a letter to the President

was dated in April 11. The Agricultural Division was accordingly

organized and discussed.

General Order. The Division was organized in May 1917 in accordance

with the plan, for the purpose of producing agricultural commodities.

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conservation of foods and farm products.

The Food Production Act granted what then seemed large sums to the Department for the control and eradication of livestock diseases, for the procuring, storing, and furnishing of seeds, for the prevention, control and eradication of harmful insects, for the further development of the Extension Service (\$4,348,000), for a survey of our food supply, and for the development of Departmental information work. The Cooperative Extension Service sprang into new prominence as an agency ready to hand through which the Government might promptly communicate its requirements to farmers.

A special Farmers' Bulletin appeared on The Small Vegetable Garden. Home economics workers told housewives how to can, dry, salt, otherwise preserve, and store foods of all kinds, practical demonstrations being given. The women were enlisted in a food-saving campaign, their attention being called on March 3, 1917, to the fact that at least \$700,000,000 worth of food was wasted annually in the United States. Arrangements were made to supply ten million cans at cost to Southern counties to be used in canning fruits and vegetables. Efforts were made to retain skilled farm labor on the land. The farmers responded patriotically.

As Secretary Houston wrote in the final paragraph of this report:

The farmers of the Nation have always shown their devotion to the cause of freedom and have not been slow to respond to their country's call for men and means to defend its rights. They will not submit to Germany's dictation. They will not permit her to impose illegal restrictions on their privilege of going freely to any part of the world where they have a legal right to go or of sending their products into the open markets of the world. They will realize that the dictum of Germany that this country should not send its ships at will to the ports of the great nations of Europe was not only unwarranted and impertinent, but also that, if it had been acquiesced in, it would have involved them very particularly in great direct financial loss and suffering.

Secretary Houston continued that this struggle was being "waged to determine whether the world shall be dominated by the will and policies of medieval despotisms or by those of free and enlightened modern States, and whether the mere right of might or the rule of law shall prevail in the world." Farmers could be depended upon to work, produce, save, and send their sons to fight. Thus the struggle would surely be brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

Fortunately for the Nation the struggle had been brought to "a satisfactory conclusion" before November 15, 1918, when Secretary Houston submitted his sixth report. He now thanked the farm people and the State and Federal agricultural workers for the too little known and appreciated part they had played in delivering the world from despotism. He also thanked farm journal editors and farm organizations.

Secretary Houston felt that we must for some time continue to raise more cereal grains than we required domestically, for impoverished Europe would require much food from us at least until normal relations were again established with Australia, India, and Argentina. Competition from these quarters was ultimately certain. Moreover, our agricultural agencies must be improved so that we could intelligently execute such plans as seemed wise after full discussion. In short, we must have a rationally planned agricultural industry.

Secretary Houston's seventh and final report was submitted under date of November 15, 1919, though the next report, submitted by Secretary Meredith, in part covered Houston's term. This report opened:

America during the war helped to save Europe and to preserve civilization by making available to the Allies, through increased production and conservation, large supplies of foodstuffs. But for this contribution, it is difficult to see how the Allies could have waged the war to a victorious conclusion.

The cessation of hostilities had brought no immediate improvement in Europe. Revolution broke out, discipline was relaxed, morale was low, idleness and unemployment prevailed, and in some sections anarchy reigned. But in 1919 it was felt that civilization would be restored if Europe could be fed. In that year American farmers planted a still greater acreage and the land in cultivation had increased tremendously since pre-war days. They had produced plentifully but they could produce still more.

But Secretary Houston warned against overproduction. He doubted that necessity for immediate and rapid expansion of farm acreage. He observed that the demand for farm products was not so elastic as that for manufactured articles and that equilibrium must be maintained between rural and urban industry. Inelasticity of demand for farm products could lead to market glutting and serious loss. The aim should be a planned, steady, stabilized flow of agricultural goods to market. After all farming was now a business and must pay. "It would be unwise to stimulate a large increase in the per capita farm acreage at the present time," wrote the Secretary.

Instead American agriculture should consolidate the gains already made and prepare for the world competition soon to be expected. The services of the most experienced and judicious agricultural leaders should be utilized in determining where, when, and how to bring into cultivation and develop public and private unused land. The possibilities of utilizing land not now cultivated should be determined by a careful scientific survey. The Secretary was, in fact, so abreast of the times and so appreciative of planned agricultural land use as to say:

The situation of possibilities had provided an immediate response.

most in Europe. Revision from all, discipline was retained, none.

and for, financial and management provided, and in some instances

anarchy reigns. But in 1917 it was felt that civilization would be re-

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But industry insisted upon a different proportion. The demand

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serious financial and serious loss. The aim should be a balanced, steady,

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ditions of the most experienced and brilliant agricultural leaders should

be studied in systematic ways, when and how to bring into cultivation

and develop public and private owned land. The possibilities of utilizing

land not now cultivated should be determined by a careful scientific survey.

The Secretary was, in fact, no expert of the farm and no representative of

planned agricultural land use in 1917.

Distinctive regions should be fully studied with a view to assembling all existing data on productivity, cost of making the land available, present tenure and prices, type of agriculture best adapted to the conditions, possible returns, minimum size of farms capable of supporting families in reasonable comfort, minimum equipment needed at the beginning of settlement, sources of credit, and marketing and transportation facilities.

The scientific possibilities of economic use should determine land utilization. Too much unwise land settlement was under way at the time. Prospective settlers needed more scientific guidance. Whereupon Secretary Houston went on that "the increase of tenancy has become the subject of deep concern to thoughtful students of rural conditions." This was bad because tenants stayed on farms only a short time as a usual thing and they manifested little interest in farm improvement. Unwholesome exploitation of the land resulted.

During 1918 also a committee of outside agricultural experts had been assembled at the Department to give advice on the Department's work in the fields of farm management and agricultural economics. Circular No. 132 of the Office of the Secretary constituted their report. They approved cost of production studies, farm life studies, studies in farm organization, farm financial arrangements, farm labor, agricultural history and geography, demonstration work and "land economics (land utilization), involving the consideration of land resources, values, ownership and tenancy, settlement and colonization, and land policies." The Chief of the Office of Farm Management was charged with supervising this work.

Secretary Houston concluded this final report by listing the new agencies and laws that had been set up and passed during his term. The principal items on the list were the Bureau of Markets, the Cooperative Extension Act, the Cotton Futures Act, the Grain Standards Act, the Warehouse

Illustrative purposes should be fully reviewed with a view to securing all existing data on productivity, cost of using the land available, present income and output, type of equipment best adapted to the conditions, possible returns, estimate also of future output of supporting land, and in connection therewith, suitable equipment needed at the beginning of development, sources of credit, and marketing and transportation facilities.

The attention was called to the fact that the

land utilization. Not much more land settlement was under way at the time. Prospective settlers needed more suitable facilities. However, Secretary Hooten said on this "the income of land has become the

subject of deep concern to thoughtful students of rural conditions."

This was not because income rested on land only a short time as a rule, but that they manifested little interest in land improvement. The same explanation of the land problem.

During 1919 also a committee of outside agricultural experts had

been assembled at the Department to give advice on the Department's work

in the fields of farm management and agricultural economics. General

No. 12 of the Office of the Secretary contained their report. They

approved cost of production studies, farm life studies, studies in farm

organization, farm financial statements, farm labor, agricultural history

and geography, demonstration work and farm economics (land utilization),

involving the consideration of land resources, values, ownership and

tenancy, settlement and colonization, and farm legislation. The Chief of

the Office of Farm Management was charged with supervising this work.

Secretary Hooten submitted this final report for listing the new

agencies and farm work had been set up and passed during his term. The

principled items on the list were the Bureau of Markets, the Cooperative

Extension Act, the Cotton Industry Act, the Grain Standards Act, the Veterans

Act, the Federal Aid Road Act, the Federal Reserve Act which authorized new types of rural credit, the Federal Farm Loan Act, and the Vocational Educational Act. He might have added the Bureau of Crop Estimates and the Office of Farm Management.

He felt that a broad survey of rural conditions to be urgently needed. A comprehensive, flexible program should be developed. The work of the many agricultural agencies should be more closely coordinated. But "a program made by any one element would be partial and unsatisfactory. We should have a meeting of minds of all those directly concerned, of farmers, of agricultural leaders, and of businessmen." He urged the President to call a national agricultural conference from which he hoped a permanent rural life commission might result.

The single report submitted by Secretary E. T. Meredith on November 15, 1920, in part concerned Houston's work. Crops were large and farmers not unprosperous. But the market was falling and there was acute shrinkage in values. Farmers were not now getting a fair return, yet they must adjust themselves to drastic changes in world economic conditions. Even in a year of bumper crops the farmer may lose because prices go down. Means must be devised of carrying over to periods of low production the surplus from years of high production -- the germ of the Ever-Normal Granary.

Moreover, a sharp eye must be kept on world conditions. Accurate foreign-market information must be made promptly available to farmers. We read:

Much loose thinking and many wrong conclusions are based on false impressions concerning the profitability of farming. The increase in farm profits during the war was inevitably transitory. Moreover, measured in purchasing power, they shrank rapidly as a result of the rise in general commodity prices.

1944, the Federal Reserve and the Federal Reserve Act which authorized
new types of currency, the Federal Reserve Act, and the Federal
Reserve Act. It might have been the subject of some discussion and
the Office of the Secretary.

He felt that a more active or more detailed to be actively
needed. A comprehensive, flexible program should be developed. The work
of the many national committees should be more closely coordinated. The
"a program needs to be set up which would be certain and measurable," he
should have a feeling of kind of all those directly concerned, at least,
of systematic leaders, and of businessmen. He urged the President to
call a national economic conference from which he hoped a permanent
national committee might result.

The study report submitted by Secretary H. T. Harshbarger on
November 13, 1940, in part concerned Hoover's work. There were large and
fairly not unexpected. But the study was falling and there was some
disagreement in values. There was not one feeling a fair return, but this
must adjust themselves to diverse changes in world economic conditions.
There is a year of impact on the United States and some serious prices to deal.
Means must be devised of getting over to periods of low production and
keeping from years of high production -- the game of the over-throwing economy.
However, a study the most he had on world conditions. However
foreign-market information must be made promptly available to farmers. He

Thank

That these findings and many more conclusions are based
on the evidence concerning the possibilities of future
the increase in the price of the war was inevitable
therefore. However, according to the evidence, that there
might be a result of the rise in the currency market prices.

Acreage had been greatly expanded during the war. But the farmer's business was highly competitive and now wholly disorganized, while farmers lacked effective means to prevent loss of profits. At least it was felt the settlement of new areas should be discouraged. Thus many of the problems that have arisen since World War I were fully foreseen by the remarkable mind of Secretary Houston.

Secretary Meredith in his turn felt it necessary to increase the pay of the Department's scientific and technical workers if the best brains in the country were to be focused on these perplexing farm problems. Improved facilities were also necessary.

Our First World War Secretary of Agriculture was a sort of one-man New Deal all by himself. The record speaks for itself. What he might have done for American agriculture had his work not been interrupted by war it is impossible to say. Certainly he would have succeeded in preventing many acute maladjustments which caught up with farmers a decade or two later and added enormously to their difficulties and perplexities between 1921 and 1933.

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